

**A Resolution of the
Associated Students of Western Washington University Executive Board**

“Equal Representation for the ASWWU Governing Bodies”

WHEREAS, the (AS) Executive Board President of the Associated Students of Western Washington University (ASWWU), also known as the Chair of the ASWWU Executive Board, is a recurring invitee to the Western Washington University Board of Trustees public meetings; [1] and

WHEREAS, the (AS) Executive Board President of the Associated Students of Western Washington University, also known as the Chair of the ASWWU Executive Board, meets regularly with the University President and Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services; [2] and

WHEREAS, the (AS) Senate Pro Tempore of the Associated Students of Western Washington University, also known as the Chair of the ASWWU Student Senate, is not a recurring invitee to the Western Washington Board of Trustees public meetings; and

WHEREAS, the (AS) Senate Pro Tempore of the Associated Students of Western Washington University, also known as the Chair of the ASWWU Student Senate, does not meet regularly with the University President and Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services; and

WHEREAS, a total of 744 people have signed a Change.org petition requesting that the WWU Board of Trustees send the ASWWU Senate Pro Tempore a recurring invitation to their public meetings; [3] and

WHEREAS, the ASWWU membership voted to revive the ASWWU Student Senate as an equal governing branch to the ASWWU Executive Board (effective Fall 2018 to present) and to transform the ASWWU Board of Directors into the ASWWU Executive Board; [4] and

WHEREAS, the ASWWU Student Senate and ASWWU Executive Board currently are the two bicameral equal-in-power branches of the ASWWU student government, meaning the Chairs of both branches are the equal co-leaders and co-representatives of the ASWWU membership; [5] and

WHEREAS, the Executive Board President of the Associated Students of Western Washington University cannot fully represent the ASWWU membership nor can the Senate Pro Tempore; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Board President and Senate Pro Tempore of the Associated Students of Western Washington University must collaborate in fully representing the ASWWU membership; and

WHEREAS, the 2019-2020 ASWWU Executive Board President was not present at 33% of the WWU Board of Trustees public meetings, leaving no representation for the ASWWU membership; and

WHEREAS, the WWU Board of Trustees public meeting minutes of June 9, 2017, includes a report of the new ASWWU governing structure that received 97% affirmative vote from the ASWWU membership and the Board’s response was, “***The board acknowledge[s] the work of the current Associated Students Board and their commitment to this restructure;***” [4] and

WHEREAS, the ASWWU Executive Board approved the “ASWWU Student Senate Pro Tempore Job Description,” in which the Position Responsibilities include, “Serve the Students of Western Washington University by: ***Representing the interests of WWU students on all issues*** that come before the ASWWU Student Senate. Serving as the spokesperson of the ASWWU Student Senate, in coordination with the AS Executive Board. ***Regularly communicating with WWU Administration, including the University President, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services, and the Dean of Students. Attending Western Washington University Board of Trustees meetings as a recurring invitee;***” [6] and

WHEREAS, Article XII of the ASWWU Constitution approved from Spring of 2019, states, “Constitutional Amendments: All amendments to this constitution must be approved by a majority vote of the ASWWU and will be presented to ***the WWU Board of Trustees for ratification;***” [5] and

WHEREAS, the Preamble of the approved ASWWU Constitution states, “We, the Associated Students of Western Washington University, have the ***right and responsibility*** to serve as a resource and advocate for all students. For this purpose, the ***governing bodies*** of the Associated Students of Western Washington University shall, 1) represent student interests and opinions to the ***University Administration, the Board of Trustees***, academic governance structures, and appropriate external government bodies;” [5] and

WHEREAS, Article XI of the ASWWU Student Senate Bylaws states, “Amendment One, Section One... the Western Washington University Board of Trustees shall review, and ***permanently establish the aforementioned Granted Authorities*** to the ASWWU Student Senate following a ***successful academic year of 2018-2019***, with consideration to an advisory vote of the Student Senate in favor of the Granted Authorities. To permanently establish the Granted Authorities in consideration to the future of the AS WWU Student Senate... the Western Washington University Board of Trustees will need a simple majority vote according to their Charge & Charter... ***This vote will be held prior to the end of the 2018-2019 Academic Year;***” [7] and

WHEREAS, the ASWWU gave the WWU Board of Trustees a report on the 2018-19 ASWWU Student Senate’s successful academic year on June 14, 2019, “Eckman provided the board with an update on the ***accomplishments of the newly formed Student Senate***. He noted that the Student Senate held its first election of student senators which included ***sixty students running for positions in nine colleges***, and that it passed ***four resolutions intended to help improve the quality of life for students at Western***. Eckman reported that students sat on ***over forty-five campus committees, including***

with voting privileges on college curriculum committees. He noted that a new Senate Pro-Tempore has been elected for the upcoming academic year for the *first full year of the student senate;* [8] and

WHEREAS, Article IX of the ASWWU Student Senate Bylaws states its Granted Authorities, “The ASWWU Student Senate shall be granted the authority to fulfill its responsibilities within... the following granted authorities... *To appoint student representatives to standing University committees, and other bodies upon request..., To reserve the right to have a student chair,* in consultation with the University President or designee, on *all committees overseeing and appropriating mandatory and voluntary student fee dollars,*” which the WWU Board of Trustees oversees; [7] and

WHEREAS, Article XI of the ASWWU Student Senate Bylaws also states, “Amendments: The Student Senate will have the power to make, alter, and amend the Student Senate Charge and Charter or By-Laws by an affirmative vote of a 3/4* majority of the ASWWU Student Senate, and *approval by the University President;*” [7] and

WHEREAS, it is currently unclear if the WWU Board of Trustees and University President ratified the ASWWU Constitution, granted the ASWWU Student Senate’s Granted Authorities, and approved the ASWWU Student Senate Bylaws; [4] [8] and

WHEREAS, legal advisement from Assistant Attorney General Melissa Nelson states that there are RCW’s and Washington State Supreme Court hearings in place that require the Board of Trustees to approve student government governing documents; [9] and

WHEREAS, the University President’s website does not recognize the Student Senate’s existence and refers to the ASWWU Executive Board as the Board of Directors, “The AS also acts as the student voice in university administration, with governance consisting of a student [board of directors](#), Legislative Liaison, [business office](#), [personnel office](#), communications office, and general services;” [10] and

WHEREAS, the Western Washington University (WWU) Board of Trustees meeting minutes constantly refer to the ASWWU Executive Board as the Board of Directors, as well; and

WHEREAS, the term Board of Directors transformed into Executive Board, as the former term referred to the AWWU’s outdated one-branch student governance power structure and was no longer deemed appropriate due to the mandate by the ASWWU membership for an equal Student Senate; and

WHEREAS, the current public understanding of the ASWWU governing structure, the Student Senate’s power, and the Executive Board’s new name by the WWU Board of Trustees and the University President as shown in their meeting minutes, websites, and lack of approval of the ASWWU’s

governing documents is outdated and does not reflect the new bicameral equal-in-power ASWWU student governance as voted upon by the WWU student body.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

THAT, the ASWWU Executive Board requests that the WWU Board of Trustees and University President recognize the new governing structure of the ASWWU and that they reflect that understanding on their websites, future meeting minutes, and language; and

THAT, the ASWWU Executive Board requests that the WWU Board of Trustees and University President send out formal statements that acknowledge the ASWWU Student Senate as an equal branch to the ASWWU Executive Board in terms of power; and

THAT, the ASWWU Executive Board requests that the WWU Board of Trustees and University President send out formal statements that recognize the ASWWU Senate Pro Tempore and ASWWU Executive Board President as equal co-leaders and co-representatives of the ASWWU; and

THAT, the ASWWU Executive Board requests that the University President and Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services meet as regularly with the ASWWU Senate Pro Tempore as they do with the ASWWU Executive Board President; and

THAT, the ASWWU Executive Board requests that, from here on, the WWU Board of Trustees ratifies the ASWWU Constitution and grants the Granted Authorities of the ASWWU Student Senate and Executive Board Bylaws and the University President approves the ASWWU Student Senate and Executive Board Bylaws for all past and future changes in compliance with their legal responsibilities as advised by Assistant Attorney General Melissa Nelson; and

THAT, the ASWWU Executive Board requests that the WWU Board of Trustees sends a recurring invite to the ASWWU Senate Pro Tempore and ASWWU Executive Board President for their public meetings in the spirit of shared governance, student representation, equity, inclusion, and justice [11].

THAT, this resolution be distributed via email to Governor Jay Inslee, the Western Washington University Board of Trustees, Chief of Staff and Secretary to the Board of Trustees Paul Dunn, Assistant Attorney General Melissa Nelson, President Sabah Randhawa, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services as well as Interim Executive Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance Melynda Huskey, Vice President for Undergraduate Advancement Stephanie Bowers, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs Richard Van Den Hul, Vice President for University Relations and Marketing Donna Gibbs, Director of University Communications Paul Cocke, Faculty Senate President Jeff Young, Academic Coordinating Commission Chair Brooke Love, Committee for Undergraduate Education Chair Donna Qualley, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Brent

Carbajal, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Brian Burton, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Jack Herring, the WWU deans (Scott Young, John Bower, Kit Spicer, Steve Hollenhorst, Paqui Paredes Méndez, Brad Johnson, Bruce Larson, Mark Greenberg), and the WWU student body.
PASSED AND APPROVED by the Associated Students of Western Washington University Executive Board at their regular meeting on November 20, 2020.

Abdul Malik Ford
Chair, ASWWU Executive Board

Appendix

[1]: BOT Rules of Operation

https://trustees.wwu.edu/files/Rules%20of%20Operation_current_6.15.18.pdf

[2]: AS Executive Board President Job Description

<https://asvuwvu.blob.core.windows.net/media/up/2017/01/as20president20jd.pdf>

[3]: Change.org Petition

<https://www.change.org/demandequityatwwu>

[4]: BOT Meeting Minutes and Recording from 6/9/2018

<https://trustees.wwu.edu/files/2017%2006%2009%20Approved%20Board%20of%20Trustees%20Minutes.pdf>

31:26 – 35:44 of <https://video.ibm.com/recorded/104611180>

[5]: AS Constitution

<https://vu.wwu.edu/constitution>

[6]: AS Senate Pro Tempore Job Description

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r8fphOKdqlhvmIMLrJlwAntG4SXRGOuu/view?usp=sharing>

[7]: AS Student Senate Bylaws

<https://vu.wwu.edu/files/2020-05/as-wwu-student-senate-by-laws-92818.pdf>

[8]: 2018-19 Student Senate Success Report from 6/14/2019

<https://trustees.wwu.edu/files/2019%2006%2014%20Approved%20Board%20of%20Trustees%20Meeting%20Minutes.pdf>

47:04 – 01:01:19 (61:49) of <https://video.ibm.com/recorded/122350936>

[9]: General Powers and Duties of Trustees

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28B.35.120>

[10]: University President's Website

<https://president.wwu.edu/overview>

[11]: Washington State comments on the importance of college student representation in Boards of Trustees

<https://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28B.50.100>

Finding—Intent—2012 c 148: "The legislature finds that decisions made by governing boards of each respective institution greatly impact the lives of students and that student participation in the decision-making process can provide insight into the impacts of actions by trustees that are not always measurable through reports and statistics. Students are on campus every day using services and experiencing aspects of the institution that board members may only see on paper, providing a unique and valuable perspective that should not be overlooked.

Students serving on governing boards of higher education have proven effective in Washington and in over thirty other states. For over ten years students at Washington's four-year institutions of higher education have served as voting members on the board of trustees, regents, and the *higher education coordinating board, providing greater depth in board deliberations and a well-educated conduit for students to voice ideas and concerns...

Being on campus and in class every day, students are exposed to a more diverse group than any member of the board representing any one group of the community.

Student positions on governing boards are also a valuable tool for developing leadership through experiential learning. Student members learn processes of institutional governance, become involved in campus projects, analyze policy proposals, and participate in board discussions and decision making.

It is the intent of the legislature to enhance... a more dynamic relationship between students and institutions through the encouragement of student participation in policy development and decision making at the district and state level."

[**2012 c 148 § 1**](#)